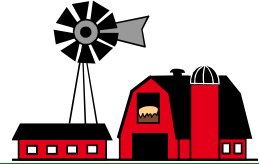




**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS**  
**Agricultural Lands Preservation Commission**  
c/o Department of Environmental Management  
235 Promenade Street  
Providence, RI 02908



**AGRICULTURAL LANDS PRESERVATION COMMISSION (ALPC)**  
**MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 27, 2014 MEETING**

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kevin Nelson, Martha Neale, Dave Wallace, Will Wright, and Michelle Sheehan for Ken Ayars.

**COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:** George Mason, Everett Stuart

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 pm at USDA, 60 Quaker Lane, Warwick, RI by Kevin Nelson, Vice Chair. Michelle Sheehan has authorization from Director Coit to vote for Ken Ayars in his absence.

On a motion by Will Wright and a second by Dave Wallace, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the November 21, 2013 meeting.

**Annual Meeting Schedule**

ALPC will meet every third Thursday of the month at 5 p.m. in the NRCS Conference Room. On a motion by Dave Wallace and a second by Will Wright, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the 2014 schedule of the ALPC.

**ALPC Budget**

Michelle Sheehan gave an update on the ALPC budget. The current balance with the 2013 bond apportionment (\$1.5 million) and current project and overhead commitments included is \$-607,500. Another \$1.5 million apportionment is due July 1, 2014 and one for another \$1.5 million is due July 2, 2015. Current project commitments are \$180,000 to Sunset Orchard in Scituate, \$150,000 to Rippin in N. Kingstown, \$255,000 to Bettencourt in Tiverton, \$550,000 to Bailey, \$249,000 to Andrews, and \$200,000 to Whaley Farm in South Kingstown. Current overhead commitments (appraisals and survey) total \$95,000.

**Status of Farms in Negotiation**

Lial, Tiverton – the Deed to Development Rights is under review by the NRCS

Bettencourt, Tiverton - the Deed to Development Rights is under review by the NRCS

Bailey, East Greenwich – the family is still interested in pursuing a development rights sale, but are still figuring out family dynamics

Sunset Orchard, Scituate – should be closing in early March

Rippin, North Kingstown – project led by the town - the Deed to Development Rights is under review by the NRCS

Whaley, South Kingstown - project led by the South Kingstown Land Trust - the Deed to Development Rights is under review by the NRCS

Andrews, Exeter – farmer does not want any houses associated with the project, would have to be re-scored.

Borrelli, Johnston – bid out for an appraisal with the intent to submit for NRCS funding

Cotta, Portsmouth - bid out for an appraisal with the intent to submit for NRCS funding

### **Governor's Green Economy Bond**

Michelle Sheehan gave a summary of the elements of the bond proposal related to farmland protection. First is the Farmland Acquisition for Active Use (\$3,000,000). The proposed program would purchase farmland, restrict it, then sell it to farmers. The purpose of the program is to keep farmland in the hands of farmers and do provide opportunities for farmers to purchase land affordably. Since ALPC cannot purchase the fee interest to land, DEM would be the take this role with ALPC holding the development rights. Second is the Land Conservation and Acquisition Program (\$4,000,000). This program often contributes to Development Rights projects, and will continue to do so. Third is the Local Land Acquisition Grants Program (\$3,000,000). This program provides matching funds to local towns and land trusts for land conservation projects, including farmland development rights.

### **Land Linking Program**

Michelle Sheehan provided an update about some efforts that are under way to help farmers get access to land. Snake Den Farm, a DEM-owned farm in Johnston is currently being leased to the Northern RI Conservation District, who will be subleasing small portions of the farm to interested farmers starting this year. In addition, the RI Food Policy Council recently commissioned the Harvard Law Policy Clinic to do an analysis of the need for a land linking project in RI. The RI Food Policy Council hopes to create a fully funded program. In addition, Ken Ayars helped to organize a Community Farm Network Conference to be held next week. The purpose of the conference is to bring together community farming entities to share expertise and knowledge and lay the groundwork for future collaboration.

### **Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program**

Mike Kenyon provided an update regarding the new Farm Bill and the changes to FRPP. FRPP and GRP are now combined into the Agricultural Lands Easement Program (ALE) under the new Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). The rules for the new program have yet to be formulated. No new applications can be submitted until this is done, maybe not until October.

Michelle Sheehan presented Cotta Farm/Quonset View Farm and Borrelli Tree Farm as possible candidates for FRPP. On a motion by Martha Neale and a second by David Wallace, the Commission voted unanimously to approve submission of Borrelli and Cotta to FRPP.

### **ALPC Membership**

Dave Wallace, Will Wright, and Everett Stuart have all submitted letters to the Governor's Office for reappointments to the Commission. In addition, Jon Reiner, Town Planner for North Kingstown, and Fay Strongin, an urban farmer in Providence, have both submitted letters of interest to be appointed. The Governor is hopefully going to be making the reappointments and appointments happen in the next weeks.

### **Announcements/Additional Business**

DEM staff, at the request of George Mason and Ken Ayars, are beginning to look at some possible amendments to ALPC's Deed to Development Rights. In particular, adding provisions to keep protected farmland actively farmed, and to give ALPC an option to buy a protected farm if it is being sold out of agriculture are being researched. Also, the possibility of making the "no further subdivision" provision a bit more flexible will also be explored. Martha Neale expressed an interest in assisting with this effort.

There being no further business, on a motion by Will Wright and a second by Martha Neale, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:05.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Sheehan  
Division of Planning and Development  
RIDEM